

S.B.365 – Oppose – Would Remove Valuable Fraud Detection/Prosecution Tool

Government Administration and Elections Committee

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Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount, a Certified Moderator, and a Computer Scientist. I have led central absentee ballot counting five times.

As I testified last week, we humans have difficulty balancing risks and reward. This is a case where the added risks outweigh the added convenience.

This bill while well intended, would eliminate the valuable fraud detection mechanism of hand-signed of absentee ballot applications. While there is little votER fraud in Connecticut, we have significant absentee votING fraud. Unlike the myth of votER fraud, we have frequent cases of votING fraud casting illegal votes by absentee perpetrated by candidate supporters sometimes aided by candidates or officials.

One of many examples: The recent case in Stamford by a former party chair, apparently in collusion with the municipal clerk. A fraud was proven only by signatures on absentee envelopes, absentee applications and that one voter who spoke up. For more details see this article in the Stamford Advocate:

<http://tinyurl.com/votINGfraudCT>

Mallozzi was charged with 14 counts each of filing false statements and second-degree forgery. He turned himself in to Stamford police on the charges, both Class D felonies punishable by up to five years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$5,000 per count...

Mallozzi's handwriting matched that of signatures on 14 absentee ballots assigned to voters who said they never requested them...

Hoti told investigators that on Election Day 2015 he was rejected at his District 8 polling place in the Cove by a monitor who told him the record showed he'd already voted by absentee ballot. Hoti said he had not. The monitor allowed Hoti to vote after Hoti filled out a form attesting that he did not vote by absentee...

State Elections Enforcement Commission officials investigated, and in May 2017 contacted the State's Attorney's Office in Stamford to report that Mallozzi "orchestrated the submission of possibly 29 fraudulent absentee ballot applications and 26 fraudulent absentee ballots" to the town clerk's office, the arrest affidavit states.

Inspectors with the state's attorney's office sent the documents with Hoti's signature to the state's Division of Scientific Services Laboratory, where an analyst determined that the signatures on the ballot package were not Hoti's...

Of the 34 applications investigated, seven were in Spanish, five were for members of Mallozzi's family and 22 were for Stamford residents of Albanian descent, most of whom were recently registered voters, according to the affidavit.

"Many of the signatures (on the ballot applications) appear to be a similar style of writing,"

Without original documents with signatures, forensic comparisons are impossible, with online applications. Signatures are much more difficult to assess and prove with faxed applications. Having a signature on file as S.B.365 suggests is useless as it is not a substitute on the application for the absentee ballot. Only an actual signature will do. It cannot be determined who actually submitted an online application.

When Connecticut instituted the Citizen Election program it was justified by a history of campaign finance corruption in the state. Similarly, a history of absentee votING fraud in Connecticut justifies opposing this bill.

Those Stamford voters could have been registered, applied by absentee ballots, and voted – all without their knowledge. Without actual signatures the fraud could not have been confirmed.

Thank you